

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2005

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, August 1, 2005 at 5:45 p.m., with Councilor President Woodrow presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Councilors Ballew, Ralston, Fitch, Lundberg, Woodrow and Pishioneri. Also present were Assistant City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Mayor Leiken was absent (excused).

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) for Justice Center Architect.

Project Manager Carole Knapel presented the staff report on this item. The Request for Proposals (RFP) has been drafted for the selection of an architectural firm for the Justice Center facility. The document is being presented to the City Council for review and discussion before it is published.

The next step in the development of the Justice Center project is the selection of the architect. The architect selected for this project must be able to produce a design which will provide for the city's justice system requirements. Equally important, the facility will be a significant community building and therefore the design will need to reflect the values of Springfield and be inviting and open to the citizens of the community.

The RFP identifies the criteria which will be used to select the architect for this project. The qualifications of the firm(s) and the individuals to be assigned to the project rank highest in the list of criteria. The successful firm must be able to demonstrate design experience in criminal justice facilities and in community/civic center buildings. Other factors include a demonstrated understanding of our community, experience in incorporating public participation into the design process, experience in the design of sustainable buildings and experience in the use of a CM/GC construction process.

Following the review of the RFP by the City Council, staff will publish the document in accordance with ORS 279B.055 and begin the selection process.

Ms. Knapel reviewed the RFP document included in the agenda packet as Attachment A. The RFP document had been reviewed by the city's Executive Team (ET), Mr. Liebert, consultant for the Justice Center Project and a retired Architect.

Ms. Knapel noted that the selection of the Justice Center Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) had been moved up to late September in order to get more applicants.

Councilor Pishioneri discussed the benefit of sustainable design. He said if we went towards a lead building, that could be a source of state or federal funding potential for the energy savings, etc.

Councilor Lundberg referred to Attachment A, page 7 in the proposed RFP. She said fifteen points seemed high regarding Item 7 in the Evaluation Criteria since the council had not yet approved the CM/GC contracting method.

Ms. Knapel said the points could be reduced or the question given less weight.

Councilor Ballew asked if contractors were checked to make sure they had Oregon insurance.

Mr. Leahy said the city's Purchasing Officer, Jon Hiltbrand, checked on those and made sure they were Oregon companies. They must be registered to do business in Oregon. He suggested making it clearer in the RFP.

Councilor Ballew asked about the selection committee and if the membership had been chosen.

Mr. Knapel said that was still under consideration, but most likely it would include two representatives from the CAC, the Police Chief and one of the Captains, the City Prosecutor or Judge, Justice Consultant Mr. Liebert, Ms. Knapel and the Assistant City Manager. They were also considering including two councilors as ex-officio members and one member from the Planning Commission.

Councilor Ballew asked if someone had experience working with architects.

Carole Knapel said she had that experience.

Councilor Fitch asked about Item 6 under Evaluation Criteria, Local Familiarity. She asked if it was an attempt to look at local architects. She noted that it received the same number of points as Item 1, Justice Facility Experience.

Ms. Knapel said the term "working in the Pacific Northwest in general" referred to things like earthquake codes and other general requirements. "Springfield area" refers more to understanding what Springfield was all about and the issues that were important to Springfield. An important piece was knowing the right federal, state and local building codes they must comply with.

Discussion was held regarding Justice Experience and whether or not to increase the points for that issue.

Councilor Fitch suggested taking five points from Item 7 and adding them to Item 1, Justice Experience.

Councilor Ballew asked if this was a contract where cost could not be a guiding influence.

Discussion was held regarding cost as an effect of this contract.

Mr. Leahy said he would confirm whether or not this is the type of contract where cost cannot be a guiding influence or if cost is a factor whether or not that needed to be noted in the RFP.

Councilor Woodrow complimented staff on their work.

2. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study Consultant Presentation.

Deputy Fire Chief John Garitz presented the staff report on this item. In light of the continuing decline in the reserves of the EMS fund, a national consulting firm was engaged to conduct a comprehensive financial and operational analysis of the city's EMS and medical transportation system to identify potential areas for improving financial and operational performance.

The primary goal of the project is to analyze Springfield Fire and Life Safety's EMS and ambulance transportation program to determine if there are options to improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy to make the EMS program sustainable into the future.

For the past several years, the City's EMS fund has experienced a negative operating cash flow which has reduced the EMS Fund reserve below acceptable levels.

The EMS Study consultant will present his finding to council and be available for questions.

Mr. Garitz reviewed the EMS Program and the issues it had faced over the last few years regarding funding losses. He said they would hope to come back to council after summer recess for options for a more sustainable EMS Program budget. He noted that staff had also made a recommendation to the City Manager for the formation of a Fire and Life Safety Planning Task Force and they would be asking for input on that option as well.

Mr. Garitz introduced Rick Kellar from Fitch and Associates.

Mr. Kellar gave a history of the EMS Program and funds and the reason why this study was done. Two primary causes for the bulk of the deficit were identified. The first was the implementation of the Medicare Fee Schedule. This schedule impacted the west coast significantly and had been phased in since 2002. The Medicare Modernization Act mitigated the impact to the Pacific by adding some additional revenue for Medicare reimbursement and extending the phase-in until 2009. That did not counteract the major impact. The second major impact was the pull-out of the City of Eugene for billing and collections and the separation of the FireMed operations resulting in a loss of revenue. He said the Springfield system was a high performance EMS system. He explained the characteristics of high performance EMS. He discussed the number of medic units the EMS program runs.

Mr. Kellar said patient revenue for the 5000+ transports generated out of the EMS System was approximately \$2.5M and with the projection, came in a little better. The new projection indicated the impacts of the Medicare of Modernization Act and that the biggest impact of the Medicare Fee Schedule had passed. FireMed generated \$500,000, billing services \$300,000+ and other revenue \$100,000. The revenue supporting the EMS Fund was approximately \$3.5M. The expenses allocated to the EMS Fund were approximately \$4.4M. The department had been cutting expenses so that figure may be less. The deficit may be somewhat lower than the \$900,000 projected because of the factors listed above. He discussed the expenditures from the EMS Fund which included: approximately \$3M for personnel; \$600,000 for dispatch fees paid to

City of Eugene and indirect expenses paid to the City of Springfield; and the vehicle rent. The total non-personnel costs were approximately \$1.5M.

Mr. Kellar said during the twenty years of surplus funds in the EMS Fund, a number of positions in the Fire Department that were not directly related to EMS and ambulance transportation were funded through the EMS revenues. There was approximately \$400,000 of specific non-EMS personnel positions funded through the EMS Fund. The EMS and FireMed provide a positive financial contribution to the city over and above the direct expenditures that were required to generate those funds and operate the EMS System. If the city were to eliminate EMS, the city would still need to locate \$1.2M to fund those positions that EMS currently funds. The dispatching fees would not be decreasing if EMS were eliminated because Fire would still be dispatched.

Mr. Kellar described the three EMS delivery options under consideration including: 1) Eliminate EMS; 2) Modify Staffing for Fire Services and EMS; and 3) Retain Current System. He explained the advantages and disadvantages of each option. He discussed the EMS funding options including: 1) Modify Use and Sources of Funding; 2) Fire District Consolidation; 3) Ambulance District; 4) Medical Response Fee; 5) Regional Non-emergency Ambulance Services; and 6) Expand Current Revenue Producing Programs. He discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options. He said Springfield's EMS Program was well-respected throughout the Northwest. He said it was efficient and well run.

Mr. Kellar discussed changes locally. He talked about the South Lane County Medic Unit in Creswell and the City of Eugene moving their medic unit to Station 6, which was in an area that Springfield would have normally responded to. He discussed the loss in revenue relating to some of those changes. He discussed the impact on Eugene when the Lane Rural District implemented its medic program. PeaceHealth moving into Springfield would be a large impact to the program. Discharges from the hospital would account for an increase in volume. Any time a transport could be done that would generate revenue it was a positive.

Mr. Kellar summarized the findings of the report. He said Springfield had a good system and was a positive contributor to the city. The forecast in the next five years showed it would continue to be a positive contributor. He named things that could mitigate this deficit.

Councilor Ralston asked about delivery Option 2 which discussed reducing the number of people at a station from five to four. Springfield had five stations, but only three would be affected by this reduction.

Mr. Kellar said he would be cautious reducing staffing from Station 3.

Councilor Ralston asked why a fire truck had to follow an ambulance to a call.

Mr. Kellar said the standard was for the Fire Department to provide medical first response. The trend was to elevate the first response to the ALS or paramedic level, which Springfield had. The ambulance would arrive shortly after the fire truck to transport the patients if needed. The ambulances were busier than the fire trucks, so the fire truck could generally arrive before the ambulance. He said operational changes may or may not be able to be made, but those were the operations standards. Once the ambulance arrived and it was determined the fire truck was not longer needed, it was released.

Mr. Garitz said there were five fire engines and three medic units. The fire engines were more geographically disbursed around the city and could arrive to the call sooner than the medic units and begin on the care of the patient. He discussed the standard and the nationwide goal to reach the scene in four minutes or less ninety percent of the time.

Mr. Kellar said the response time for an ambulance was more like ten minutes. He discussed the importance of getting medical attention to the patient as quickly as possible.

Chief Murphy said the number of personnel at the scene related to how quickly they could get a patient out, especially with multiple injuries. He explained. Even if the city eliminated the ambulance service, the Fire Department would still be first responders and would need to have the personnel to assist.

Councilor Ralston asked if it took two people to run a fire truck and get it to a location.

Chief Murphy said it did take at least two people to drive the truck. He explained. Federal OSHA guidelines required four people on every fire apparatus to respond and initiate the interior attack for a fire. Springfield only uses three, but with the ambulance there are four or more on the scene. Any combination of fire truck and ambulance could be used.

Councilor Ralston said that was for fire, but he was asking about emergency response.

Councilor Ballew said EMS had done a lot of work, but they were not self-supporting. The paramedics paid from the General Fund were doing more of the work. She was not saying to stop EMS, but she felt changing the billing to only do direct billing did not make sense. These were all city services.

Mr. Kellar said the ambulance transport component of EMS generated the revenue as well as FireMed. The amount of money that came in for the patient revenue and FireMed in the billing services was more than what it cost to provide those services. He said even without EMS, the city would need to find \$1.2M to fund other non-EMS positions in the city's fire department.

Councilor Ballew said she didn't agree and felt it was not a complete picture.

Councilor Fitch said things were changing in the fire service. She asked about the ratio of the number of calls for EMS versus fire.

Mr. Kellar said it was seventy percent medical and thirty percent non-medical. He said that was fairly consistent from fire service to fire service. He said this was on the high side of non-medical. Many times it was seventy-five to eighty percent medical.

Councilor Fitch asked about the number of firefighters on each apparatus and if that was enough according to the standards based on Federal guidelines.

Mr. Kellar explained the number of personnel on the apparatus. The majority of fire departments operate with three personnel on each fire engine and have a mechanism to bring it back to four. He said he did not know of any fire departments that had cut back to two personnel per apparatus. Some cities rotate which stations are closed on a given date.

Councilor Fitch discussed the option Eugene had adopted in responding to certain calls and asked if something similar had been considered for Springfield.

Mr. Kellar discussed the option Eugene had used in using civilian paramedics rather than firefighter paramedics. There was not a great financial benefit for Springfield to change to that option. He said the only flexibility would be not to use traditional shifts.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if staff scheduling options were part of the analysis.

Mr. Kellar discussed the minimum requirement for a service area and the East Lane County area. He said scheduling was not specifically in the analysis, but was considered. He discussed the issue regarding changing the scheduling, maintaining staffing and the risk involved if the units were understaffed.

Chief Murphy discussed ISO ratings from the insurance company. Springfield's ISO rating is three. He noted that Springfield had grown faster than the services. He discussed funding for EMS personnel and fire engines. It was difficult to isolate funding and expenses.

Councilor Ballew asked about serving East County and if it was worth reducing.

Mr. Kellar said servicing that area was regulated by the state and they probably would not change their service areas. He reminded council of existing capacity and the revenue that comes from it. He said Springfield was behind on the firefighter personnel side but not on the ambulance personnel side.

Ms. Pappas said that information could be covered at a subsequent meeting after council recess.

Councilor Ralston said he was happy with the service Springfield had, but there needed to be a balanced budget. He discussed expanding billing services and asked about the actual cost of running the EMS Program. He said he would like a better picture of projections. He noted that he was opposed to districts. He referred to Mr. Kellar's comment about needing more equipment if the service area was expanded and asked about ambulance service in outlying areas and if there was already enough service in those areas.

Chief Murphy suggested a task force of community members that could bring forward options.

Council asked staff to bring back answers to their questions and options to balance the budget at a Work Session sometime following council recess.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder